

Weekly Column for May 12, 2005

Many of you know that we had a terrible fire in South Troy on Wednesday that rendered a historic building useless and filled the sky with thick black smoke. I just want to take a few moments to discuss that situation.

Shortly after 5 a.m., fire crews were on the scene at Dan's Hauling and Demolition off of Water Street, attempting to put out what quickly became a fast-moving fire. The crews did their best for the better part of 8 hours, but in the end, it was not enough to save the building.

While its current state was that of a trash transfer station, many moons ago, the building that burned Wednesday had quite a remarkable place in history. Back in 1862, smack dab in the middle of the Civil War, there was a great battle between two ships, the Monitor and the Merrimack, a battle that would eventually prove that wooden war ships were obsolete. The amazing thing about the battle from our standpoint is that the iron for the Monitor was forged right here in Troy, NY. The building that burned yesterday is where it all took place.

It is a sad loss for the City, but hopes of saving the building disappeared a long time ago. Instead this has the potential to be an opportunity to build up. The owners of the business have already reopened business as of this writing, and they will tear down the structure in the coming days. The area is still zoned industrial after our recent rezoning, and it is my hope that they will build back up again on the site.

I would like to thank everyone that did their best to help out during the fire yesterday. We received aid from Albany, Watervliet, and the Watervliet Arsenal. I also want to thank everyone for the patience exhibited yesterday. I know the smoke was brutal, especially in parts of South Troy. Thank you for dealing with that. And thanks to the commuters who had to reroute their travel plans due to the closure of the Menands Bridge. That was likely a big pain to everyone, but with all of the material on the site of the fire, we could not take any chances by leaving the bridge open during the early morning hours.

Yesterday was very unfortunate, but in the end, we hope that some good will come of it.

On a completely unrelated note, next week will be a restaurant column that I promised this week. I hope everyone has a good weekend.

Harry J Tutunjian
Mayor of Troy